

# St. Philip's Lutheran Church Nursery Handbook 2024-2025



Serving the Shepherd, Loving His Lambs

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Nursery of St. Philip's Lutheran Church! It is the desire of St. Philip's Lutheran Church to support and promote a healthy, safe, and loving environment for all the children while attending worship services & functions of this church. Our Nursery policies are stated in order to promote unity and understanding between parents and Nursery Staff at St. Philip's. Thank you for the privilege of caring for your children!

This handbook is divided into two sections: namely, Nursery parents and Nursery staff. In order to foster unity and understanding, parents and staff are encouraged to read both sections.

Finally, if you have any comments or suggestions about the Nursery Ministry, please contact the Nursery Coordinator listed on the front page of this handbook or the Pastors. We welcome your input.

# Nursery Ministry

## Mission and Objectives

### Mission

At St. Philip's the purpose of our children's ministry, including the nursery ministry, is to come alongside parents as they seek to raise their children in the love and grace of the Lord. We seek to provide opportunities for children to be given instruction in God's Word, engage in worship, be involved in fellowship, and to give expression to their faith through service.

#### For Parents . . .

##### Our Objective

The Nursery Ministry desires to come alongside parents by providing a safe, loving environment for their children (through 4 years old) as they attend worship and church functions.

#### For Children . . .

##### Our Objective

The Nursery ministry not only seeks to provide a safe, loving environment for children, but to share with children a love of God and God's church.

#### For Nursery Staff . . .

##### Our Objective

The Nursery Ministry desires to equip and encourage the nursery staff in their ministry with the parents and children of St. Philip's.

# Section I

## Nursery Parent Information

### Facilities

The nursery is staffed Sunday mornings from 7:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Additionally, the nursery will be available during all Special Worship Services through the year. There may be various other times when nursery care is offered for meetings, special worship opportunities and functions. Those times will be announced when they are available.

### Staff

Our nursery is staffed by a paid nursery caregiver. When he/she is absent, either another caregiver or trained volunteer from our congregation will provide the care. For safety and consistency, drop-in workers are not allowed. Please contact the Nursery Coordinator to become a nursery caregiver.

### Handbook

This Handbook contains all policies, procedures, mission statements, contacts and any other information that pertains to the Nursery Ministry. It is for every family that has nursery age children.

## Sunday Morning Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

### For Parents . . .

1. Please arrive a few minutes before the worship service to get your child settled.
2. Sign your child in on the Sign-in sheet. It is important to provide all requested information.
3. Communicate any instructions both verbally and in writing to the nursery caregiver.
4. Enjoy Worship and church functions. If there should be a problem, the nursery caregiver will contact you by a text message on your cell phone (number provided during sign-in).
5. Return promptly to the nursery and pick up your child by initialing them out on the sign-in sheet. *Please do not send relatives or siblings to pick up children.*

### Items to Be Provided in Diaper Bags:

1. Enough diapers for your child. Parents are requested to write child's name on his/her diapers to aid in the process of changing diapers.
2. Enough milk, juice or water for their child in bottles and/or sippy cups labeled with child's name. Please label bottle caps as well.
3. A labeled change of clothes.
4. If a child is using a pacifier, it is helpful if the pacifier is on a "leash" that can be attached to the child's clothes. This will help to prevent others from picking-up dropped pacifiers.
5. One comfort toy (or blanket) clearly labeled, if a child has separation anxiety.

Toys from home present hygiene problems, are a distraction to other children, and are difficult to locate among the other toys. Please leave them at home.

### Wellness Policy

To create the healthiest environment possible for your child, the nursery is cleaned thoroughly each week and after each use. Workers are encouraged to wash their hands continually in order to prevent spreading of germs. To assist us in this effort to create a healthy environment, please do not bring your children to the nursery if they have any of the following symptoms. Children should be symptom free for 48 hours before returning to the nursery.

- Fever or do not appear well
- Continuously runny nose or frequent nasal drainage, regardless of the color of the drainage or treatment with antibiotics
- Frequent loose or watery stools
- Frequent cough or sneeze
- Vomiting

If your child has a clear runny nose or other symptoms due to allergies, please let us know. We realize some symptoms hang on when a child is not contagious. Thank you for doing your part to adhere to this wellness policy.

## Potty Training

The Nursery is very willing to help cooperate with the parents when they are potty training their child. We ask, however, that parents of children that are being potty trained must (1) provide a complete change of clothes for the child in their diaper bag, (2) communicate to the nursery caregiver that their child is potty training, and (3) be willing to return to the room to help the child use the bathroom (if necessary).

## Behavior and Discipline

When a behavior problem occurs, the youngest child will be redirected to a more appropriate activity. Older children (Toddler 2 and up) will be told that their behavior is inappropriate, have the correct behavior modeled for them and then may be asked to apologize to another child if the circumstance calls for reconciliation. If the above procedures are ineffective, the parents will be asked to come to the nursery room. If your child is struggling with a certain behavior, please communicate this information to the nursery caregiver so that they can help monitor the situation on Sunday mornings. If aggressive behavior such as biting, hitting, or pushing happens, parents may be asked to stay with their child in the nursery until the behavior has improved.



## Section II

# Nursery Caregiver/Volunteer Information

### Age Requirement and Qualifications for Staff and Volunteers

Staff and Volunteers must be at least 12 years or older to work in Nursery. No volunteer should be in the nursery who has not been trained and screened ahead of time.

### Job Description

#### Arrival:

The nursery caregiver is, at minimum, responsible for providing nursery care on Sunday mornings all year long (which includes Sundays that fall on holidays). The caregiver should arrive at least than 15 minutes prior to the start of the first worship service on Sunday mornings per the Nursery Caregiver's Sign In Sheet (located on the nursery counter).

Upon arrival, the Nursery Caregiver should turn lights on, open blinds, insure that the room is picked up and in order and that there are no hazards that may exist since the last time the nursery was used.

The nursery should always be picked up, orderly, and clean. It is the nursery caregiver's responsibility to present all aspects of the nursery in that way both before and after nursery is in operation. This includes eliminating clutter and debris, picking up toys, etc. as well as insuring that there are not "too many" toys in the nursery. Toys that are rarely, if ever, played with should be discarded.

The nursery has a gate and when the nursery is in operation, the door should be open at all times and the gate closed. This will insure that people know that the nursery is open and there is a visual line of sight into the nursery (no closed doors).

Because parents often arrive late or need to bring their children out of worship during the service, the Nursery Caregiver is to be present until the end of the worship services for the morning and until all children have been picked up by parents.

#### Dress:

Although it is anticipated that the nursery caregiver or volunteers will often be on the floor with children, caregivers should be dressed in casual, yet functional clothing. An example would be sneakers, dockers style chinos, casual dress shirts/sweaters. Our dress should reflect the ministry that we are conducting with our children and parents.

### **Days Off**

The paid nursery caregiver is welcome to take any Sunday off that they wish for any reason. However, when they take a day off, they will do the following:

- It is the responsibility of the Nursery Caregiver to find a substitute and notify the Nursery Coordinator of this schedule change. Please do so in a timely manner.
- If no substitutes are available, this, too, must be communicated to the Nursery Coordinator as soon as possible.

### **When a Child Is Sick**

If a child seems or becomes sick, do not hesitate contact the parents of the child immediately so they can evaluate the child.

### **Supplies**

The nursery rooms should be adequately supplied with all items that you will need for Sunday morning. If a supply is missing or low, it is the responsibility of the Nursery Caregiver to notify the Nursery Coordinator.

### **As the children check in . . .**

The nursery caregiver should be at the door helping parents to check in. The caregiver should greet the children with a genuine smile and warm words, using their name as they arrive at the door. Parents are to sign in on the sign in sheet and may give verbal instructions. Be sure to know the parents' location in the building.

### **Interacting with the Children**

All workers are expected to show love, understanding, and acceptance for all the children. Nursery workers are encouraged to stoop, squat, hold, sit on a child-sized chair or sit on the floor with the child when working in the nursery. Being on their eye level helps get and maintain their attention.

During the children's' time in the nursery, it would be wonderful if the nursery caregiver could engage the kids for a short time with a Bible Story, Craft, or even Bible Songs. The time spent in the nursery is sacred time that is centered on: introducing them to Christian Education; building relationships; creating productive time/activities that is not just idle time waiting for mom/dad to get back.

### **Diaper Changing**

Before the parents pick up the child, the caregiver is to check that the child's diaper has been changed if necessary. Each child should be changed at least once during the morning, especially if they are prone to wet themselves. Diapers are to be changed at the changing tables. Workers are to wear a new pair of disposable gloves before each diaper change. Dirty diapers may be placed in the trash can in the room, but it is imperative that the trash can

be emptied to the dumpster at the end of the morning (or before if necessary). Do not ever leave a dirty diaper in the trash can or in the trash cans in the ladies'/men's rooms once the child care ends. Likewise, children should not be returned to parents with unchanged diapers.

### **Taking a Child to the Bathroom**

There is a child's toilet in the nursery, if necessary. Workers and children are to wash their hands afterwards.

### **Discipline**

When a behavior problem occurs, the youngest child will be redirected to a more appropriate activity. Older children (Toddler 2 and up) will be told that their behavior is inappropriate, have the correct behavior modeled for them, and then may be asked to apologize to another child if the circumstance calls for reconciliation. If the above procedures are ineffective, the parents will be asked to come and talk with their child. If aggressive behavior such as biting, hitting, or pushing happens, parents may be asked to stay with their child in the nursery until the behavior has improved.

### **Care of Toys**

If a toy has been in a child's mouth, then it is to be sprayed or wiped with disinfectant and then placed on counter to air dry. After the toys are dry they can be returned to the appropriate location.

### **When Parents Come to Pick Up . . .**

Children can only be released to their parents. Remind the parent to check out on the sign in sheet.

### **After they have all gone . . .**

The caregiver will complete the tasks listed on the Nursery Room Checklist. This sheet is to be completed each week. Any notes as to needs for supplies, repairs, etc. may be communicated to the Nursery Coordinator on the checklist. The specific tasks to be completed at the end of the nursery caregiving time are:

- Remove to the dumpster any trash bags containing dirty diapers (dumpsters are located outside the North Door).
- Turn off **all** lights
- Pick up all toys, debris, clutter and return chairs, tables, etc. to their proper places so that the room is in a neat and tidy condition.
- Wipe down all surfaces and changing tables
- Close the nursery door

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

All Nursery Staff are to familiarize themselves with the exit location for their room's evacuation in case of an emergency. It is important that workers remain calm in order to keep children safe and so that the parents are able to locate their child.

## Information Regarding Toys and Equipment

### Type and Quality of Toys

Only age-appropriate toys are to be used in Nursery rooms. A high standard of toys is to be maintained. Any toy that is broken, torn, rusty or dirty beyond cleaning is to be thrown out. Toys must be easily cleaned with disinfectant and water.

### Battery operated equipment and toys

At the end of Sunday morning, all toys and equipment that run on batteries should be turned off. Replace batteries as needed.

### Evaluating & Replacing Toys

Once a year the Nursery Coordinator will go through all the toys in the room and evaluate them for age-appropriateness, quality and ease of cleaning. Toys that do not meet these criteria will be removed or replaced.

### Cleaning Toys

Toys that have been in the mouth's of children need to be disinfected after each service on Sunday mornings. Place the toys on a paper towel on the counter and spray with nursery cleaner and leave to air dry. After toys are dry, they can then be returned to their appropriate location. The room is cleaned thoroughly once a week.

### Changing Table

The changing table is to be wiped clean with nursery cleaner after each child is changed. The changing table should be wiped clean at the end of Sunday morning.

*"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power & the wonders he has done . . . so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born . . . and they in turn would tell their children" Psalm 78:4b,6a*